

REMARKS

Applicants thank Examiner McAlister for participating in a telephone conference with Applicants' attorney on October 12, 2011. During the telephone conference, Applicants' attorney and Examiner McAlister discussed the present rejection of claim 1 and possible claim amendments that may overcome the present rejection. Claim 1 as amended herein includes amendments similar to those discussed with Examiner McAlister. Although agreement was reached that this claim amendment may overcome the present rejection and place the application in condition for allowance, Examiner McAlister further indicated that an additional prior art search and further analysis of the amended claims would be required before a final decision on the allowability of the claims is made.

Prior to the present amendment, claims 1-11, 13-24, 26-36, 38-44, 46, 47, and 49-61 were pending in the application. The Final Office Action dated August 11, 2011 indicates that claims 18-24, 26-36, 38-44, 46, 47, and 49-54 are allowed, and that claims 1-11, 13-17, and 58-61 are rejected under a new ground of rejection. This paper amends independent claims 1 and 58. Claims 1-11, 13-24, 26-36, 38-44, 46, 47, and 49-61 remain pending in the application after entry of this paper.

Independent claims 1 and 58 are amended herein to more clearly recite Applicants' invention. Applicants are not conceding that the subject matter encompassed by the claims prior to this Amendment is not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner. The claims are amended in this Amendment solely to facilitate expeditious prosecution of the application. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue claims, including the subject matter encompassed by claims 1-11, 13-24, 26-36, 38-44, 46, 47, and 49-61 as presented prior to this Amendment as well as additional claims in one or more continuing applications.

The Final Office Action rejects claims 1-9, 11, 13, and 15, and 58 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hutton (U.S. Patent No. 5,277,224) in view of Coleman (U.S. Patent No. 4,711,268). Applicants traverse the rejection to the extent that it is maintained against claims 1-9, 11, 13, and 15, and 58 as now set forth because Hutton and Coleman, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest every limitation as set forth in these claims.

Applicants' invention as recited in representative claim 1 in relevant part relates to a pin valve assembly that includes a pin block, a fluid plate including a fluid channel, and a fitting block. The fluid plate has a first surface and a second surface opposite the first surface. The fitting block covers the entire first surface of the fluid plate and the pin block housing covers the entire second surface of the fluid plate. The first and second surfaces extend to a periphery of the fluid plate.

Hutton at FIG. 3 teaches a five valve manifold comprising an equalizer valve 54 (referred to in the Office Action as a pin block), wall portions 33, 34, 36, 40 of an integral body 25 (referred to in the Office Action as a fluid plate) and a football flange 30 (referred to in the Office Action as a fitting block). However, there is no teaching or suggestion in Hutton of the football flange 30 of Hutton covering an entire surface of the fluid plate 33, 34, 36, 40. As shown in FIG. 2 of Hutton, the football flange 30 is substantially smaller than the bottom surface of the integral body 25. Similarly, the equalizer valve 54 of Hutton is substantially smaller than the top surface of the integral body 25.

Coleman also teaches a valve manifold. However, Coleman likewise fails to teach or suggest a fitting block covering an entire first surface of a fluid plate and a pin block housing covering an entire second surface of the fluid plate, as recited in amended independent claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that Hutton and Coleman, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the limitations identified above in amended independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) against claim 1.

Independent claim 58 as amended above recites claim language similar to that of independent claim 1 and is therefore patentable for at least those reasons provided in connection with claim 1.

Claims 2-9, 11, 13, and 15 depend from independent claim 1, and are patentable for at least those reasons presented above in connection with independent claim 1. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of these claims also be withdrawn.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hutton in view of Coleman, and further in view of Cooper, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,713,333 – hereinafter “Cooper”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection because claim 10 depends from allowable independent claim 1, and is patentable for at least that reason.

Claims 14, 16, 17, and 59-61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hutton in view of Coleman, and further in view of Hauck (U.S. Patent No. 6,012,487). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection because claims 14, 16, 17, and 59-61 depend from allowable independent claims 1 and 58, respectively, and are patentable for at least those reasons.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify

agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims that have not been expressed.

In view of the remarks made herein, Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance and request early favorable action by the Examiner.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with the Applicants' representative would expedite allowance of this application, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned at (508) 303-2003.

Respectfully submitted,

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